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**SECTION:** Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 15**LENGTH:** 609 words**HEADLINE:** Terrorist material found in Sarajevo charity raid**BYLINE:** David Pallister**BODY:**

Nato peacekeepers in Bosnia have discovered a cache of Islamic terrorist-related material at the offices of one of Saudi Arabia's leading aid agencies with links to the royal family, it emerged yesterday.

The raid on the Sarajevo offices of the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia took place last September, but officials have not revealed what was found until now.

The new evidence will be hugely embarrassing to the Saudi royal family, which has consistently shrugged off reports that Saudi-backed charities have been used as a front for al-Qaida operatives.

A few weeks after the raid six men, including an administrator at the commission, were arrested by the Bosnian authorities for suspected links to al-Qaida. They were believed to be plotting to blow up the US embassy in Sarajevo.

In January, after being released by a federal court for lack of evidence, the six men – five Algerians and a Yemeni – were handed over to US officials and transferred to Kandahar. They were then flown to the US terrorist holding centre, Camp X-Ray, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The raid netted computer files on the use of crop duster aircraft, instructions on how to fake US state department identification badges, and photographs and maps of Washington marking government buildings. About pounds 70,000 worth of local currency was found in a safe, as well as anti-Semitic and anti-US computer material for children.

A spokesman for S-For, Nato's stabilisation force in Sarajevo, yesterday confirmed to the Guardian that the files and safe were seized, but declined to give details. He said they were now in the hands of the Bosnian government.

The Saudi aid initiative to Bosnia was founded in 1993 by Prince Salman, the governor of Riyadh province, and supported by King Fahd. Hailed as the largest fundraising effort in the Arab and Muslim world, it has delivered more than Dollars 600m (pounds 375m) in aid for mosques, cultural centres, schools and orphanages.

Since September 11, Saudi-funded charities in half a dozen countries have been linked to al-Qaida. Mercy International Relief Agency, registered as a company in Dublin in 1992 by six Saudi dissident academics, was used by the cell which bombed the US embassy in Kenya in 1998.

Nato suspicions about the presence of an al-Qaida cell in Bosnia were triggered when US intelligence discovered that one of the six men arrested, Bensayah Belkacem, had been making telephone calls to Bin Laden's operations chief in Afghanistan, Abu Zubayah. Numerous blank western passports were found at Belkacem's house in the central town of Zenica.

Among those arrested was Sabar Lamar, an administrator at the commission's Dollars 9m complex, which includes a mosque that can accommodate 5,000 people. The others all worked for Muslim charities.

After their extradition, Fahd Al-Zakari, the high commission's director, told the Associated Press: "Nobody here supports terrorism."

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Although the Saudi aid effort in Bosnia has been generous, it has been widely criticised by aid agencies and Bosnian intellectuals for importing the extreme form of Saudi Islam, Wahhabism, which is alien to the more moderate secular form found in Bosnia.

\* An Italian court yesterday convicted a Tunisian suspected of heading Osama bin Laden's European logistics operations, handing down the first guilty verdict in Europe related to al-Qaida since September 11. Essid Sami Ben Khemais, known as "the Sabre", was convicted of charges including criminal association with the intent to obtain and transport arms, explosives and chemicals, and was sentenced to five years in prison.

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